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March 29, 1901

## SYRIA.

*Smallpox in Jerusalem and Jaffa in 1900 and 1901.*

BERLIN, GERMANY, March 6, 1901.

SIR : I have the honor to submit the following report of the outbreak of smallpox in the cities of Jaffa and Jerusalem, as obtained from the imperial health office.

The recent smallpox epidemic in Jaffa is alleged to have developed as a result of the disease raging in Jerusalem since August of last year. The former, according to a communication of February 4 is already on the decline. Among the German colony at Jaffa numbering 520 persons, only 4 smallpox cases occurred, of which one terminated fatally; all of those attacked had either not been vaccinated at all, or if vaccination had been attempted the same had not taken effect.

As regards the smallpox epidemic in Jerusalem, it is considered probable that the disease was introduced into that city from Egypt. In the beginning of the month of August of last year a few adults were first attacked with smallpox in a mild form. In the middle of August the serious cases had increased to such an extent that almost half of the patients died. In the ensuing months the disease steadily increased, the highest number of cases occurring during the month of November.

According to the communication of February 4, above-mentioned, the total number of smallpox cases up to that time in the city of Jerusalem and suburbs, had reached 1,500 to 1,600, out of a population of about 60,000 persons. It is claimed that from 35 to 40 per cent of the patients died. The disease raged most violently among the Mohammedan inhabitants, causing many deaths and many cases of blindness among them.

Among the Armenians who are designated as especially "enlightened," only 1 case and 1 death occurred, namely that of a girl who had refused to submit to vaccination. Notwithstanding the fact that the vaccination law of July 21, 1894, has in general not been strictly enforced, almost the entire population of Jerusalem was once vaccinated. A revaccination has, however, up to the present time, not taken place, and it is just this neglect that explains the fact that most of the patients were adult persons or children over 7 years of age.

The general vaccination or revaccination, respectively, recommended by most of the physicians soon after the beginning of the epidemic has, it is claimed, proved very effective as a preventive measure.

In most of the schools, convents, and other institutions under European management infection was successfully avoided by vaccination of all persons between 6 and 60 years of age, and even in the Armenian colony, excepting in the case of the Armenian girl above mentioned, who declined to undergo vaccination. The remainder of the population was thoroughly opposed to the advice of the physicians, partly from indifference and partly from the superstition that it is dangerous to get vaccinated during an epidemic of smallpox. Since November the Government has endeavored to carry out the vaccination law more strictly, with the result that the epidemic has rapidly decreased.

Respectfully,

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*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

The SURGEON GENERAL,  
*U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.*